

March 2, 2018

To: The Connecticut Education Committee

RE: Written Testimony for HB 5372, An Act Concerning Dyslexia Instruction Offered in Teacher Preparation Programs, scheduled for Public Hearing on March 8, 2018

My name is Kara Berghaus, I live in Wilton Ct. I fully support HB 5372, an Act Concerning Dyslexia Instruction Offered in Teacher Preparation Programs.

This bill is necessary to bring Connecticut stakeholders to the table to ensure that previous dyslexia legislation is being implemented within our Institutions of Higher Education, with fidelity and consistency. As an educator, counselor, Co-Chair of Wilton Public School district's Parents Advisory Board for Special Services and a parent of a child with specific learning disabilities/ dyslexia, it is critically important that we support the ongoing and professional development of our teachers in research and evidence based structured literacy. Structured literacy needs to make its way into the foundation of our schools' language arts curriculum. The teachers graduating from higher education need to come out prepared to appropriately instruct and intervene with students that struggle with literacy so they can begin to make meaningful progress and begin close the achievement in literacy. I am currently pursuing my Associates level coursework in structured literacy. I witnessed many reading specialists, interventionists and special education teachers break down into tears admitting that the training in structured literacy was the first course they have taken where they actually were taught how to help students that struggle with language based learning disabilities/ dyslexia.

Structured literacy benefits ALL students because it provides a better foundation of the English language and sets the roots for proficiency in literacy from the start. While this approach benefits ALL learners, it is absolutely vital to those that struggle and oftentimes it is the only route for achievement. There are many students in need of this approach and so many that are not achieving in literacy because teachers are not appropriately trained on how to deliver instruction with fidelity and integrity. Please support and co-sponsor this important educational bill so we can begin to make real progress in literacy proficiency across our state and our nation. Thank you in advance for supporting HB 5372.1

Sincerely,

Kara Berghaus  
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